

ISLAMABAD WELCOMES SOUTH ASIA

The 4th South Asian Federation Games ended in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, on 27th October, with a convincing demonstration of the games' motto: "Together in sports, together in friendship." These eight-day championships, which were dominated by Indian sportsmen and women, saw the Pakistani team finish second in the overall medal count - ahead of teams from the other SAF member nations: Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, with the organizing committee deserving its own gold medal for the smooth running of events.

By Chittaranjan Biswas

4th SOUTH ASIAN FEDERATION GAMES

The President of Pakistan, Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan, opened the games in a packed Jinnah Stadium on 20th October, the crowd of fifty thousand cheering as the 800 athletes and officials from the seven countries trooped in to the strains of the games' theme song.

A memorable touch in the colourful march past was the entry, with two hundred children, of the games' mascot, a dancing horse, marking the age-old relationship in sport between man and horse.



The former world boxing champion Mr Mohammed Ali was there as a guest of the Prime Minister, Mrs Benazir Bhutto. Ali, ever the showman, indulged in a spot of shadow boxing, to the delight of spectators.

The torch relay, which had started from Mazar-e-Quaid-i-Azam in Karachi and travelled through the four provinces of Pakistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir, arrived for the lighting of the flame. The Pakistani athlete Mr Mohammed Rashid, gold medallist in the javelin in Calcutta in 1987, gave the oath on behalf of the athletes.

The programme was composed of ten sports: track and field, boxing, swimming, football, kabaddi, squash, table tennis, weightlifting and wrestling. Swimmer Khajan Singh from India won the biggest number of medals in the games with seven gold medals, in the 100 and 200 m butterfly, the 100 m freestyle, the 200 m individual medley and the three relays, the 4 x 100 m freestyle, the 4 x 100 m medley and the 4 x 200 m freestyle, with a silver in the 50 m freestyle. At the last games in Kathmandu (NEP) in 1984, he had taken eight golds.

Indian women did well in track and field events, taking ten golds, but it was the first time that the Pakistani women had ever won a medal, this time in athletics, with a

REGIONAL GAMES



NEXT GAMES IN COLOMBO

The South Asian Sports Federation unanimously decided to award the next games to Sri Lanka. These will be held in the capital Colombo, which already has all the necessary infrastructure, in September 1991. According to Mr Roy De Silva, the NOC President, there will again be ten sports on the programme.

Khajan Singh (IND), who had almost a clean gold sweep in swimming events.

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bronze in the 4 x 100 m athletics relay. A result which owes much to Mrs Bhutto's declaration when she became Prime Minister that "our women should participate in sports and games". In the marathon at the last three games, Nepalese runners had been the leaders. This time it was the turn of Sri Lankans Vidana Samarsinghey and Vijitha Samarshekhara to take the gold and silver respectively.

On the final day, Syed Wajid Ali, IOC member and President of the Pakistan Olympic Association, announced the close of the games, calling for the youth of the seven countries present to gather again in two years' time in Colombo. Mrs Bhutto reminded everyone that without losers there could never be winners and thanked China for having transformed and modernized the Jinnah Stadium, which had been the heart of the games.

Kabbadi, a sport immensely popular throughout the region.

